



The zucchini are everywhere

Every summer, zucchini takes over. It's piled high at every farmers' market, two-for-a-dollar at the grocery store, and pushed on you by that coworker or neighbor who grows an annual overstock. Summer squash is cheap, endless, and ready for almost anything, so let's put it to good use.

Meet the Squash Squad

Zucchini gets all the attention, but the summer squash family also includes yellow squash, pattypan, and the green-and-gold zephyr. They all have thin, edible skin, cook in minutes, and taste mild enough to go savory or sweet without complaint.

A Few Fun Facts

- Botanically, zucchini is a fruit. Nutritionally and culinarily, we generally treat it like a vegetable.
- "Zucchini" comes from the Italian zucchini, meaning "little squash," which is optimistic if you've seen the ones lurking at the bottom of the bin.
- One plant can produce 10 pounds in a season, which explains your coworker or neighbor.
- The record zucchini topped 65 pounds.

Why It's Good for You

Summer squash is low in calories and mostly water, with fiber, vitamin C, potassium, and the eye-friendly antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin. The skin holds most of the good stuff, so leave it on.

Zucchini's Magic Trick

The real magic is that zucchini is almost all water and fiber, so it fills you up for almost no calories. That makes it the easiest way to stretch a heavier dish without feeling like you gave anything up. Spiralize it into zoodles in place of some or all of your pasta, grate it into muffins and quick breads where it adds moisture and lets you cut back on oil, or pile it into soups, sauces, and scrambles to bulk up the bowl. You end up eating more and feeling full, which is about as close to magic as a vegetable gets.

How Not to Ruin It

The number one zucchini crime is sogginess, and it comes from all that water. Salt your sliced or grated squash, let it sit ten minutes, then squeeze it dry before it hits a hot, uncrowded pan. Cook it fast over high heat and resist the urge to stir, so it browns instead of steams, and pull it while it still has some bite.

Fast Delicious Ways to Use the Pile

- Seared in thick coins with olive oil and garlic
- Grated into fritters or a quick bread
- Ribboned raw into a lemony salad
- Blended into soup for body
- Roasted with cherry tomatoes
- Tucked into tacos or a grain bowl

Crispy Zucchini Fritters



Makes about 12.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound zucchini (about 2 medium), grated
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup chickpea flour (or all-purpose)
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh dill or parsley
- Black pepper
- Olive oil for the pan

Instructions:

1. Toss the grated zucchini with the salt and let it sit 10 minutes, then squeeze it dry in a clean towel. Squeeze harder than you think you need to.
2. Mix the zucchini with the chickpea flour, scallions, garlic, herbs, and a few grinds of pepper until it holds together. Add a splash of water if it's too dry, a little more flour if it's too wet.
3. Heat a thin layer of olive oil in a skillet over medium-high. Drop in small mounds, flatten gently, and cook 3 to 4 minutes per side until deeply golden and crisp.
4. Drain on a towel and eat warm, with lemon or a garlicky tahini dip.